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Script of the history of the caravan

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SCRIPT: "Time Capsule of The AUC Caravan's Newspaper"
Youssef Helmy
March 2015

Important: Music is looped throughout the audio documentary just as a background soundtrack that acts as a soothing sound that doesn't distract the audience.

(-- :-- -) --(--:--) time to edit from tapes

Travelling through time to see how The AUC's Caravan has changed over a period of time, dating back to the early 1900's where it all started.

Introducing a Sound bite, rhetorical question to the audience, "when you hear the words Caravan and American University Of Cairo, what is the first thing that pops up in your head",

Music: Fade in: joyful music played

Public opinion: answering the question

The Caravan, *(Nat sound of typewriter)* A newspaper that is delivered, to the American University of Cairo on a weekly basis, dating back to 1919

Music Fade in: looped

Its been that long, with this audio documentary, I'm going to be talking to some of the people and carry out extensive research, that dates back to the 1940s, so I can get an idea on how the caravan, has changed over a period of time, the first person I interviewed was Dr. Firas Al-Atraqchi, who was a veteran to the history of the caravan, who was a former student in the caravan and now manages the caravan for the auc students, who runs the show, and delivers the caravan newspaper, to the auc community on a weekly basis.

Dr: Firas Al Atraqchi (FA)

FA: *“Well, ok, we are talking about something like 20 something years ago so if memory serves it was an awesome experience, great to be around so many talented people, i need to say that i wasn’t a student in the mass com department i was a physics major, at that time back in the 90s the caravan was so much more inclusive you had so many people from different backgrounds and majors, in the caravan, it was a great place to learn and enhance your skills and learn off other people” (:25) 00.25-00:50*

It was extremely interesting to find out how Doctor Firas himself used to deal with the technology and lack of technology back in the day.

Music: looped repeatedly

(FA): *“We had keyboards, but we didn’t have, digital anything there was no digitization, so we had to actually print photographs in a dark room ourselves, the photographers would come in, with a reel of negatives, and we used kind of a magnifying glass to look at the pictures and decide what we wanted, it was very archaic, you might watch it in the movies now, and then we would actually print the pictures in the dark room and sort of, use scotch tape to put it over the printed version of the newspaper, and we would take that to the printer and then they would print the film and everything so it was very different, now its a lot faster of course, but the students are equally slow.” (39) 2:15-2:54*

Through the midst of getting interviews of former students of the caravan who are teaching now at the auc I decided to carry out further extensive research and head to the rare books library on the auc campus to go back further in time and see what the professors and students of the 1940s to 1960s had to say and the journalism department, and the caravan itself,

Music: De-amplified and faded out, still playing in the background

Soundbite faded in from old archive of introduction to interview,

Marucher (M): *I am reminiscing, with mr lesly nichols who was at the university from 1937 to 1944 as a professor of journalism, as the chairman of that department and also as director of admissions. 00:00-00:15 (15)*

Music: De-amplified and faded out, still playing in the background

Lesly Nichols (LN)- I had at that time, I thought, one of the finest groups of students, that could be brought together anywhere in the world, to study together to look together, at journalistic problems, not only from the standpoint of their own country and ofcourse that was basic, but from the standpoint of the world at large to relate their problems with other nations, but basically, to see how they could best serve the Arabic press in their own country, and this was our goal this was our ambition. 15:35-14:05 (30)

After hearing what Dr. lesly Nichols had to say about the journalism department in the 1940s it was time to go and listen to what Youssef Ibrahim student of 1961 had to say about the caravan and the auc campus,

Music: Looped repeatedly

Youssef Ibrahim (YI): There was a campus caravan, it wasn't very regular at this time but it was being published, I remember this was the period where the Bartlett president Thomas Bartlett of administration started implementing the plan of expansion, vertical I mean horizontal expansion, I think in the period of 1962-1968 the university almost tripled its size, it required new property, and spread its campus, particularly there was an emphasis on graduate studies. 5:00-5:30 (30)

When carrying out this research, there was one interview that struck me the most, it was the interview of Miss Eva Habib el-Massry who was the first female student to graduate from the American university of cairo and attended from years 1928-1931 just over about 80 years ago, she was the only female student to attend auc out of the 350 students enrolled, having traditional arab parents her parents were uneasy at first about her being the only female student, however they let her decide what she wanted, this interview was re-enacted from an old transcript.

Music: faded in and re-amplified looped

EHM: In my junior year I took a course in journalism, and I was asked and accepted to be assistant editor in chief of the review, now it's called the caravan I don't know how long it remained as the AUC review, but anyway this was the name it had in my days. In my senior year I became editor in chief the review was published twice monthly during the year and at commencement time a special commencement issue was published. Working on the review enabled me to meet many fine contacts, both within auc and outside it 00:00-00:20 (20)

To find out how the caravan has helped graduating students in the employment life, I went and interviewed roqayah tbelieh a student who graduated 3 years ago

Roqayah Tbeilah (RT) working in the caravan helped me in my career after I graduated, I mean not only in journalism, however in everything in life, whenever I had to reach a contact I knew how to reach a contact, I learnt that running a magazine or newspaper isn't as easy as it is, as it may sound. 2:27-2:52 (25)

I then went to Doctor Rasha Abdulla who helped me understand what pushed her towards the caravan, and what was the legacy of the caravan back in the day

Rasha Abdulla (RA): what made me join was that I noticed a crew of very dedicated students who were doing something that seemed kind of meaningful, I didn't have that much information about it at the time, but I decided to try and I wanted to know whether or not this would be something that I would be interested in for later on in my career and once I got registered into the course which was the first step for you to join the caravan, I sort of became hooked, and so I was just taking the course but I used to stay longer hours in the caravan spend Wednesday night at the caravan, we would get pizzas we were in tahrir at the time ofcourse and pizza hut was just a new thing, and so we would all get pizzas from pizza hut and sit on the floor and eat pizza on Wednesday night and work on the caravan and that is the story. 0:07-00:57 (50)

It was also quite interesting to find out how dr rasha was connected to Dr. Firas at the time and both of them were students at the same time and both of them experienced the caravan at the same time,

Ra: Firas was a student at the time when I was there, I think if I remember correctly, I think he ran for editor and chief the year I was about to leave, the year I was graduating but we didn't work together, directly but I remember as I was starting my masters he was taking over the caravan, and I'm sure he did a great job back then as he's doing now. 1:38- 2:00 (22)

After gathering all the primary research I thought it was about time to go old school, and hit the books I visited the caravan room where the magic has been happening since 1919, from the books I got all the old archives and the oldest stories that date back to 1960, lets hear some of them...

Soundbite: of people reading out the headlines.

This audio documentary was produced by Youssef Helmy for the audio production course at The American University in Cairo taught by Professor Kim Fox in spring 2015.